WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for use in trading commodities, comprising:

receiving from a potential buyer a specification of at least one of a plurality of parameters characterizing tradable commodities of a common class;

automatically or electronically searching a database of commodity parameters to locate particular commodities having the specified parameter; and

providing to said potential buyer identifications of all particular commodities having said specified parameter.

2. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, from said potential buyer, an order including at least one order parameter;

detecting, among the particular commodities identified to said potential buyer, a match to said order; and

executing said order.

3. The method defined in claim 2 wherein said at least one order parameter is taken from the group consisting of price, yield, order type, time in force, and quantity conditions.

4. The method defined in claim 3 wherein said specified parameter is taken from the group consisting of tax status, redemption features, credit quality, coupon rate,

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payment schedule, and maturity.

5. The method defined in claim 2, further comprising:

providing said potential buyer with a plurality of pool type options prior to receiving said specified parameter from said potential buyer; and

subsequently receiving from said potential buyer a selection as to a desired pool type consonant with investment goals of said potential buyer,

the searching of said database taking place only after the selection as to a desired pool and said specified parameter have been received from said potential buyer,

the searching of said database including searching for only those commodities of the pool type selected by said potential buyer.

6. The method defined in claim 5 wherein said pool type options are particular cases of investment goals and tolerance for risk.

7. The method defined in claim 2 wherein said order is received from said potential buyer prior to the automatic or electronic searching of said database.

8. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising:

providing said potential buyer with a plurality of pool type options prior to receiving said specified parameter from said potential buyer;

subsequently receiving from said potential buyer a selection as to a desired pool type consonant with investment goals of said potential buyer,

the searching of said database taking place only after the selection as to a desired pool and said specified parameter have been received from said potential buyer,

the searching of said database including searching for only those commodities of the pool type selected by said potential buyer.

9. The method defined in claim 8, further comprising grouping commodity data, pertaining to commodities for sale, in pools according to respective pool types prior to receiving from said potential buyer said selection as to desired pool type and prior to receiving said specified parameter from said potential buyer.

10. The method defined in claim 9 wherein said pool types are defined at least in part by investment goals and tolerance for risk.

11. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the receiving of said specification from said potential buyer, the automatic or electronic searching said database, and the providing to said potential buyer of identifications of all particular commodities having said specified parameter are all performed automatically, in an absence of operator intervention.

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12. The method set forth in claim 11 wherein the receiving of said specification from said potential buyer includes the receiving of signals over a global computer network, the providing to said potential buyer of identifications of all particular commodities having said specified parameter including the transmitting of signals over said global computer network.

13. The method set forth in claim 12, further comprising transmitting information to said potential buyer via World Wide Web pages.

14. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising providing said potential buyer with a plurality of pool type options prior to receiving said specified parameter from said potential buyer, said specification received from the potential buyer constituting a selection as to a desired pool type consonant with investment goals of said potential buyer, the searching of said database including searching for only those commodities of the pool type selected by said potential buyer.

15. The method defined in claim 14, further comprising:

receiving, from said potential buyer, an order including at least one order parameter;

detecting, among the particular commodities identified to said potential buyer, a match to said order; and

executing said order.

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16. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising:

storing said specified parameter from said potential buyer; and

sending a confirmation back to said potential buyer as to said specified

parameter.

17. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising:

receiving, from said potential buyer, an order for particular one of the

commodities identified to said potential buyer; and

executing said order.

18. The method defined in claim 1 wherein the specification received from said

potential buyer includes a price and constitutes an order, further comprising:

after searching said database, detecting at least one tradable commodity

satisfying said order; and

thereafter automatically executing on said order.

19. The method defined in claim 1 wherein said specified parameter is taken from

the group consisting of tax status, redemption features, credit quality, coupon rate,

payment schedule, and maturity.

20. A method for use in trading commodities, comprising:

receiving from a potential buyer a specification of at least one of a plurality of

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parameters characterizing tradable commodities of a common class;

automatically or electronically searching a database of commodity parameters to locate particular commodities having the specified parameter; and

automatically executing a trade for at least one particular commodity found during the searching of said database.

21. The method defined in claim 20, further comprising:

providing said potential buyer with a plurality of pool type options prior to receiving said specified parameter from said potential buyer;

subsequently receiving from said potential buyer a selection as to a desired pool type consonant with investment goals of said potential buyer,

the searching of said database taking place only after the selection as to a desired pool and said specified parameter have been received from said potential buyer,

the searching of said database including searching for only those commodities of the pool type selected by said potential buyer.

22. The method defined in claim 21 wherein said pool types are defined at least in part by investment goals and tolerance for risk.

23. The method defined in claim 20, further comprising receiving, from said potential buyer prior to the executing of said trade, an order for said particular

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commodity.

24. The method defined in claim 20 wherein the receiving of said specification from said potential buyer, the automatic or electronic searching said database, and the executing of said trade are all performed automatically, in an absence of operator intervention.

25. The method set forth in claim 24 wherein the receiving of said specification from said potential buyer includes the receiving of signals over a global computer network.

26. The method defined in claim 20 wherein said specified parameter is taken from the group consisting of tax status, redemption features, credit quality, coupon rate, payment schedule, and maturity.

27. A system for use in trading commodities, comprising:

a database storing, for each of a plurality of commodities, respective particular entries for each of a plurality of investment-related parameters;

a communications link for carrying, from a potential buyer, a specification of at least one of a plurality of parameters characterizing tradable commodities of a common class;

a decoder operatively connected to said communications link for detecting said

specification of said one of said plurality of parameters;

a search module operatively linked to said decoder and said database for automatically or electronically searching said database to locate particular commodities having the specified parameter; and

an encoder operatively connected to said search module and said communications link for providing to the potential buyer identifications of all particular commodities having the specified parameter.

28. The system defined in claim 27, further comprising:

an order interpretation module operatively connected to said communications link for detecting an order from the potential buyer, said order including at least one order parameter;

a comparison circuit operatively connected to said order interpretation module and to said database for detecting, among the particular commodities identitifed to the potential buyer, a match to the order; and

an order execution module operatively linked to said comparison circuit for executing a trade on the order upon detecting of a match to the order.

29. The system defined in claim 28 wherein the one order parameter is taken from the group consisting of price, yield, order type, time in force, and quantity conditions, the specified parameter being taken from the group consisting of tax status, redemption features, credit quality, coupon rate, payment schedule, and maturity.

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30. The system defined in claim 27 wherein said database stores data defining a plurality of commodity pools, said decoder being a first decoder, said encoder being a first encoder, further comprising:

a second encoder operatively connected to said communications link and to said database for advising said potential buyer as to a plurality of pool type options prior to receipt of the specified parameter from the potential buyer; and

a second decoder operatively connected to said communications link for detecting a selection from the potential buyer as to a desired pool type consonant with investment goals of the potential buyer,

said second decoder being operatively connected to said search module to indicate to said search module the selection from the potential buyer as to desired pool type, so that said search module searches in said database for only those commodities of the pool type selected by the potential buyer.

31. The system defined in claim 30, further comprising a classification module operatively connected to said communications link for grouping offered commodities in pools depending on particular parameters characterizing the offered commodities.

32. The system defined in claim 31 wherein the commodity pools are defined at least in part by investment goals and tolerance for risk.

33. The system set forth in claim 27 wherein said communications link is

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connected to a global computer network.

34. The system set forth in claim 27, further comprising a World Wide Web page generator, said decoder and said encoder being connected to said page generator.

35. The system defined in claim 27, further comprising an order execution module operatively linked to said search module for executing a trade on a commodity listed in said database and uncovered by said search module.

36. A system for use in trading commodities, comprising:

a database storing, for each of a plurality of commodities, respective particular entries for each of a plurality of investment-related parameters;

a communications link for carrying, from a potential buyer, a specification of at least one of a plurality of parameters characterizing tradable commodities of a common class;

a decoder operatively connected to said communications link for detecting said specification of said one of said plurality of parameters;

a search module operatively linked to said decoder and said database for automatically or electronically searching said database to locate particular commodities having the specified parameter; and

an order execution module operatively linked to said search module for executing a trade on a commodity listed in said database and uncovered by said search module.

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37. The system defined in claim 36 wherein said database stores data defining a plurality of commodity pools, said decoder being a first decoder, further comprising:

a second encoder operatively connected to said communications link and to said database for advising said potential buyer as to a plurality of pool type options prior to receipt of the specified parameter from the potential buyer; and

a second decoder operatively connected to said communications link for detecting a selection from the potential buyer as to a desired pool type consonant with investment goals of the potential buyer,

said second decoder being operatively connected to said search module to indicate to said search module the selection from the potential buyer as to desired pool type, so that said search module searches in said database for only those commodities of the pool type selected by the potential buyer.

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